

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

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WHEN WRITERS READ

"Reading maketh the man," the old saying, I believe, has it. At any rate, reading has an important part in every writer's life. A lot of us do not do half enough. I remember Herschel Brickell's mild mannered disgust at the UNW Conference last summer at the writers of Novel Ass., who never read the leading book review publications, or many present day novels. If words are your trade, how can you expect to go far with it unless you know what is being written?

There is such a thing as reading too much and too carelessly. In the final analysis, a reader buys your book or the magazine which carries your stories or articles or essays, poems, etc., because he wants to learn from you or be entertained. In either case, right or wrong, he wants to see you stand up with an intelligent or clever idea, a point, behind what you write. If you read too much & become merely a sponge for other people's ideas, you won't hold a reader. But you will do no better if you isolate yourself or try to write from an empty mind. As you fill up with good, nourishing mental and emotionalized ideas, you will generate thoughts, sentiments, ideals and emotions of your own. A reader will be challenged, stimulated, creatively entertained by the out of your mind and heart.

One of the big problems today is what you should read. If you spend all of your time, energy and thought on comics or television, you won't have the cargo space for valuable stuff. I believe that one of the biggest ideas that our schools should teach the future citizens of this country is a love for worthwhile sources of ideas. The continuous flood of cheap, worthless mass entertainment of all kinds, when added to the even larger torrent of advertising is a serious problem to the man or woman, who has had no specialized training on how to sift it for what is valuable to him or her. The Tower of Babel, indeed, is a quiet place to retire for some quiet reflection compared to the world-wide rash of words and ideas in which we live.

For the writer who is intent on growing & maturing, so that his voice may be heard above this fatuous hubbub, it is especially a stern responsibility to work out some practical method of self-organization. He must have some values, some standards of choice, before he can select in anything more than a haphazard manner. With the best intentions in the world, he can spend all his days doing the wrong thing.

Speaking for myself, I have found that my reading divides itself up into a number and variety of categories. One is technical. As fully as I can, I try to read all the textbooks and handbooks about writing that come along. Because I have read almost every pub-

lished book on short story writing and a very high percentage of those on most other subjects connected with writing, I can run over the new ones easily. I recognize familiar ideas and trite presentation. I look for the new idea and the novel point of view. I search constantly for a new and better grasp on the eternal fundamentals, which continually become more apparent as I see the same thoughts beaten out in new type. But I constantly try to dip into the older books our growing library contains, and refamiliarize myself with the theories of other teachers.

Another category in my reading is writing itself. I want to see what is being done in magazines and books. We encourage exchanges with many other magazines, so that we always may have our fingers on the pulse of American writing. Many of the magazines we merely watch for changing format, new editorial ideas. But we read stories here and there & keep alert for factual treatment of subjects we ought to know about. This kind of reading frequently pays off in a specialized manner because we often can surprise our clients by being able to speak authoritatively regarding their handling of an obscure or specialized field of human activity.

Then there is the third category of great books or pieces of writing. These will never be found on the shelves like graded vegetables. No one can tell you what is Great, or good for you. If your mind does not follow the philosophical line, it is useless to waste hours trying to absorb Plato, although you should try at least once or twice. Your main idea should be eternally alert for the good food that God often mysteriously casts in your path. Remember, too, that you often learn from bad books. An understanding reading of them will make you treasure more the books that for you are stimulating and full of truth. Remember, again, that Truth is an exciting goddess, who constantly changes in form and character as you pursue her, and as you yourself mature or degenerate. You must love life and always crave the new and better ideas, emotions, if you are to fill the hold of your ship. Don't be content with an inferior or standardized set of ideals.

And don't spend all your life reading. It is a means, not an end in itself. You have a job to do. You must write words yourself. So you need to alternate. Read and meditate, & then go and do. Sharpen each division against the other. Do some reading in all three categories that I have mentioned. Think of the immediate need and of the long range goals. Get immediate enjoyment out of your reading but match it up against all that has gone before. Watch for similarities and contrasts. Remember that you may not be ready for some books when you read them. Come back to them later. Above all, remember what results you can achieve by systematic or regular application of time and energy. Five minutes a day!

REWRITE

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AMERICA William E. Harris, DEMAND
IS WHAT Elva Ray Harris, A STRONG
YOU MAKE IT! Editors. FAIR "U.N."

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS—we cannot be responsible for changes not received in this office ONE MONTH in advance of taking effect. Whenever possible, please give exact date of change. PROMPT RENEWALS help us to serve you better.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS about REWRITE. They will like, and so will you, our great new CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE. No other magazine offers a similar, or so accurate and widely covering service on such an individual basis.

LET US OUTLAW STRIKES AND WAR!

This is an election year and we are right in the middle of a speechmaking season. The politicians more than make up for any deficit in natural warth with plenty of hot air. They are long on lofty principles, short on any creative action. The Cold War, mounting government deficits in Washington and state capitals, the hamstringed postal service, are enough to send the politicians to cover in the face of public indignation. You can have an improved and happier world if you demand it and write up the details, spell it out in a series of simple requests backed by votes.

Here is the list of better relations that the peoples of America and the world desire ardently. Each of them is relatively simple and well within the bounds of possibility—if the politicians are made to realize that they are not only needed, but demanded by a population of determined voters.

(1) A Strong UNITED NATIONS. Whether Russia wants a solid of shooting war, and if we are sincere in our desire for peace, let's build the UNITED NATIONS. In the face of a united public opinion backed by quiet resolution & unanimity of action, no nation in the world will risk a shooting war. It would be equivalent to suicide. The dictators would surely lose power and their heads.

No iron curtain is absolute so long as men can pass a whispered word of truth and hope. Not everyone is a Communist in lands nominally controlled by the Soviets. A strong UNITED NATIONS would be our best weapon in a war of ideas and propaganda. A world organized for Peace would be the most difficult, intangible and irrefutable obstacle to con-

tinued domination and suppression at home to men in the Kremlin. It would hasten the day of disintegration of Russian imperialism as prophesied by men like Paul Hoffman. And it would not cost the equivalent of one modern battleship, infantry division or atom bomb.

(2) A Realistic World Food Program. In all the long history of Man on earth, there has never been anything so preposterously silly or shamefully iniquitous as the spectacle of a great nation, nominally a Christian nation, pricing food out of the reach of its own citizens, and destroying it while millions upon millions in other countries die of starvation.

A realistic world food program would save millions from premature death, would make a healthier race here in the United States, & would give full employment to all the races of the world for a thousand years. But instead, the politicians of this country will don frock coats and yawn platitudes about a "dynamic Democracy" come July Fourth.

(3) Honest Labor Courts. The need for "one big union" and arrogant management and labor dictators will melt away before such a very simple device as honest labor courts. Cruel and wasteful strikes would become unnecessary, if the Federal Government, Labor, Management teamed together and organized fair, impartial labor courts that could administer disputes as impartially as our legal courts now function. It is simply a matter of transferring an accepted practice to a parallel, very similar jurisdiction. Strikes, like war, should be outlawed forever.

Man's unwillingness to face responsibility and hazard the brave adventure of new and better ideas, is notorious. But continued unwillingness on the part of Labor and Management to respect the security and convenience of all the people, can lead eventually to a belief, that they desire the present outmoded system of civil violence for reasons of material profit.

(4) A Progressive, Efficient Postal System. Efficient, continuous, rapid delivery of the mails is as important as the right to vote. It is the cornerstone of any truly "dynamic Democracy". Postmaster Donaldson's "economy directive" is a symptom rather than the disease, or its cure. The willingness of politicians to vote millions for "patronage" but nothing for postal equipment, which doesn't vote, amounts to a public scandal. Both major parties share in the blame.

On the world and national level the people will always pay the price for the politicians' cupidity and cowardice. They are suckers, who will pay with their lives in wars, strikes or mere selfish "deals". Moral indignation alone will effect such lasting reforms as we have suggested above. A writer is indeed privileged. He can raise his voice and give expression to the ideas of the people.

REWRITE

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THEME—WITH VARIATIONS

The poets' workshop is again in session. In the March issue of REWRITE, Julia Hull Winner shared her experience in building a poem with our readers. In April, we discussed her revision. Other readers have shown real interest and have sent in their ideas, some of which we will reprint here.

Julia writes: "What fun, this poetry workshop. And how it expands. Where there was 1 poem, now there are several. I have thought over ways to improve my verse and still use all of the criticisms, and have come up with a brand new one. It reads:

THE QUESTION

Could dandelions grow so quick
In a new mown lawn
Or are these blooms my vision's trick?
I blink, and they are gone.

From boughs above the golden things
Peer down with curious eyes.
Are they dandelions with wings,
Or Goldfinches in disguise?

"Of course I could pluralize what I previously had considered my final draft, and so have it read:

THE GOLDFINCHES

I saw dandelions shine
In the grass along the wall
But when I reached to make one mine
It was no flower at all.

The blossoms, winged in sudden flight,
Sought the nearby trees
And goldfinches eyed me out of sight
Before they flowered the breeze.

"Now for comments. In the first I used the word 'golden' even though it is usually taboo, because 'golden' really fits goldfinch and dandelion. But if a critic insisted, the word 'fluffy' could be substituted. In the second we have the trite 'breeze-trees' rhyme yet it is suitable for the meaning here. Is it not true that it is possible to use trite and commonplace words when they really fit?"

Yes, Julia, it is not only possible, it is also effective to use trite and commonplace words when they really fit. When they say exactly what you mean, and you are sincere in saying it, they are not at all objectionable. Think of the number of times the words that are used by lovers have been repeated. "I love you." Those words may be trite, but we can't get along without them. And where is the person who wouldn't rather hear those 3 words, when the thought behind them is sincere, than to have them paraphrased in fresher, more o-

iginal terms?

The reason for avoiding trite phrases and trite rhymes is that when a combination has been used too often, it fails to stimulate, as it did in the beginning. It is like that striking of the familiar clock. We all know that after a while we just don't hear it. It does not stimulate. Neither does the trite, overworked phrase used in exactly the way we have heard it many times before. It fails to call up an image or impress us with its meaning.

But suppose the striking of the clock becomes freighted with meaning for you. Your train leaves at 8:00 and you still have ten minutes' walk to the station when the clock on Town Hall tolls eight. You will be quite sure to hear it strike. It is the same with a trite phrase. When the meaning behind it is sincere and urgent, and you don't use words just as padding, it is often more effective than forced originality. Bill once called my attention to the fact that in any routine, Broadway stage show, or Hollywood movie many stock phrases are used; phrases which would strike a recurring and familiar note in the ear of any student of the drama. But these phrases, far from being injurious, help the director to give the play a faster pace. The audience hearing them, does not need, require time to absorb them. On the contrary, their conventional overtones spring immediately in to the mind of each spectator, who "accepts" them instantly and is ready to be swept forward by the mounting emotional interest. So long as the action and characterization are not stereotyped the conventionality of dialogue, if not overdone, is acceptable.

Returning to Julia's poem, the very familiar "breeze"—"trees" rhyme is trite, but she has pulled it out, so to speak, by combining with it the original and perfectly clear and true image "flowered". Part of the objection to trite rhymes is that the rhyme words themselves are usually preceded by old and too-familiar words and ideas.

Mrs. Winner's ability to come up with not only a revision but a new version proves she is a writer. "The Question" has a more natural flow of language than previous versions, but still needs working on, especially in the last two lines where the meter is interrupted. "With wings" is hard to pronounce. Moreover, it slows up the rhythm. The extra syllable, "gold", has the same effect in line eight.

Others have been stimulated by our "workshop". Have accepted the challenge, and have sent in "exercises". We reprint one by Doris L. Gross, a teacher in Millinocket, Me. "I just did it for fun," she writes. "The way I revise student verse on the spur of the moment." Nevertheless, she did a workman-like job and it is interesting to see how another poet handles the same theme. Starting out with two lines of Mrs. Winner's earlier version, she develops her own variation.

GOLDFINCH

A dandelion blossomed
Beside my garden wall,
But when I stooped to touch it
It wasn't there at all.

It fluffed its golden petals
And suddenly took wing.
Till then I never thought to hear
A dandelion sing!

"A butterfly would be more logical," Doris commented as an after-thought.

Note the lilt to these lines. Just when the verses might become sing-songy, Doris put an extra foot in a line (7), breaking the monotony of the three-foot meter. And there is a pleasant subtlety expressed in the ending word, "sing", which takes us back to the title to complete the poem.

NOTE. So much interest has been expressed in the analysis of actual poems that we have decided to conduct, as an experiment, a POETS' WORKSHOP. It will appear at intervals, on our poetry page. So send in a practice poem, your comment about it, and your questions. Give us permission to print them in REWRITE. You realize of course, that our publication of the poem will spoil it for other editors. The WORKSHOP is primarily a laboratory for practice.

Please state also whether you wish a poem to be treated anonymously, or whether we're to give you credit. Send only poems you consider GOOD. Every poem will be acknowledged and those not used will be returned, if accompanied by a return stamped envelop.

Bill adds: tell them before they send any ms., to read the rules again!

CLEAN MSS. ARE IMPORTANT, TOO!

Here is a useful trick. If you wish to be extra neat, keep two erasers beside the type writer: one for the original, one for erasing on the carbon. It saves a lot of temper, energy and time. Your good eraser, this way, does not become coated with smudge from the carbon.

Also, as all good secretaries know, scrap paper slipped between the carbon and second copy before you erase, prevents smudge. You may wish to use the carbon copy for more important purposes than just a record in your files.

Our good friend Tiff, who has earned Ripley's pay-sheek a number of times for him by reason of being that rarity, a man with only one name, has a shocking, but helpful habit (for writers) of always referring to his THIRTEEN writer. Do you ever pause to wonder if you are writing Tripe or not? It's not a bad idea at all. Chances are that if you do ask yourself the query, you'll write better.

REWRITE

TAKE THE POST OFFICE OUT OF POLITICS!

Don't blame us for the delayed arrival of REWRITE! We have had numerous complaints in the past month concerning the "late" mailing of this publication. We, along with all other magazines that do not have Second Class, or periodical mailing rating, are penalized because Postmaster Donaldson is closing the largest business in the world, so far as the night handling of mail is concerned. In Boston now a working person can't get a letter mailed from a street corner box in the evening, because the last pick-up is at 6 P. M. Second Class & Third Class mail get handled after First Class and Parcel Post. In other words, whenever the skeleton crews can find time to dig into it. In the big cities it's piling up.

The men you elect to Congress would rather play the patronage game, the Spoils System to you, than appropriate funds to overhaul methods of delivering the mail that were antiquated 25 years ago. Broken down trucks and railway mail trains that are still lighted by kerosene lamps. Billions to burn potatoes, so that the cost of food will be kept high and some part of the human race will be sure to starve, but not one cent to keep the mail rolling! Throw billions away where the votes lie ripe for the picking, but be sure the Post Office sets a good example by running at a profit. Americans! How long are you going to stand for such chicanery? Take the Post Office out of politics with—your vote! Let your Congressmen know how the folk back home feel about such waste & inefficiency!

SPRING CAME FINALLY TO 50 WEST ST!

In spite of a wretchedly cold spring, and a never ending run of colds on the part of a junior partner, aged 5, we have been enjoying our first spring in the country. Our apple and other fruit trees have been wonderful to watch. A golden Baltimore oriole has been feeding on a blood red Japanese quince, a few feet from the porch where we eat most of our meals. Mayflowers and wild strawberries adorn our walk through the fields to the Post Office.

We hope to attend a 3-day college reunion at Harvard this month (June 20-22), and the UNH Conference (August 14-25). But at other times the three of us will be delighted, if visitors from far or near pause to chinwag.

SHOULD YOU GO TO A CONFERENCE?

I would say by all means, yes. They offer a chance to live writing intensively for an appreciable amount of time. You can talk as much shop-talk as you can take. You can talk with editors and experienced authors, picking up a great deal of practical know-how. A chance such as this to live closely with an assorted variety of people comes rarely. You will get copy even from an unfortunate conference. All of them are interesting.

REWRITE

THE CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE

POETRY, Karl Shapiro, 232 East Erie St., Chicago 11, Ill., had an excellent editorial statement by its new editor on his aims, purposes, etc., in the May issue. Also, good evaluation of the little magazines by William Van O'Connor. He discusses a number and refers to Whipple McClellan's assertion in GALLERY that there are now 150 such magazines in the United States. This article is given an additional value through the name, editor & address of each magazine mentioned being included in a neat footnote.

QUARTERLY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, T. & Renee Weiss, Box 289, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N. Y., is changing its policy, trying to give more play to the young quality, or promising writer, who cannot yet make the more seasoned quality reviews.

BARD REVIEW, Wm. Wilson & Annys Wilson, Venice, Florida, is doing likewise, although it began as an undergraduate magazine.

FURIOSO, Carleton College, Northfield Minn., is offering \$300 in prizes for long & short poems. Closes: July 1, 1950.

The Bruce Publishing Co., 400 No. Broadway, Milwaukee 1, Wis., is offering its fiction fellowships for Catholic writers. They will be given in the order that worthwhile mss., received and evaluated, are discovered. The deadline: December 1, 1950.

LYRIC, the Lyric Associates, Virginia Cummings, 959 5th Ave., NYC 21, is a new change of address fairly recently. It is published by a foundation for "Traditional Poetry", & costs \$2 per year on subscription. (Thank you, Marjorie S. Scheuer, for this report. A poet tells us she was paid 50¢ per line.)

Boston Herald, Wife Saving Station, Marjorie Mills, Boston, Mass., pays \$1 prizes, for recipes in each Sunday paper.

GOOD SPORT, Barbara Burleigh Howe, in the same paper, pays \$2 for the best title given to a published picture; \$2 for the short story under 300 words; \$1 for the best original black & white drawing about a suggested subject; \$1 for the best original poem—again a suggested subject; \$1 for best suggestion for earning money. These prizes are for readers under 17 years. Closes: Wednesday of each week preceding the Sunday paper.

TODAY'S HEALTH, American Medical Association, Dr. W.W. Bauer, 335 No. Dearborn St., Chicago, 10, Ill., will consider unsolicited mss., but they are not welcomed with open arms. A recent issue used 2 poems, 1 cartoon.

Send us any news of this kind you pick up and so help us to check the accuracy of information we have on file. Please note form we use. Tell us or indicate (1) the source; (2) precise date you obtained it.

ANALYSIS OF THE AUTO MAGAZINES

There are a number of automobile magazine markets, some open, some not. We give you a picture of some of these.

BUICK, I.I. Wiles, Buick Motor Div. General Motors, Flint, Mich. This is one of the oldest and most like a travel book in the general field. Uses by-lined articles, (short, Ill. with one or several pictures, depending on length, which is not over 600 words).

EVENTS, 431 Howard, Detroit 31, Mich. It looks staff-written, although it carries one or two by-lined pieces. This is distributed by Chrysler-Plymouth dealers.

FORD TIMES, Wm. D. Kennedy, 3000 Schaefer Road, Dearborn, Mich. This is a real pocket magazine. Ten by-lined articles. Some run to 1,500 words or more, but these are apt to be by big name writers. Others short or picture stories. An editorial staff of 8. A couple of cartoons; one or two "Americana" filler features with pictures (unusual, off the beaten track). A little humor ("Glove Dept.") and Games (Ill.)

FRIENDS, 4-105 Gen. Motors Bldg., Detroit 2, Mich. Another splash dealer help book. A filler feature at the back pays \$10 for the picture story of some Chevrolet owner's hobby.

PEOPLE & PLACES, Detroit, Mich. Another of the splash picture books. DeSoto-Plymouth.. Staff-written apparently.

HAVE YOU TRIED THIS FIELD FOR POETRY?

A market for light romantic verse that is often overlooked by poets, is the Love pulp field. Here are some of the books that give good rates.

COMPLETE LOVE, Rose Wyn, 23 W. 47th St., NYC 19, up to 20 lines. 50¢ a line.

LOVE FICTION, same address, same details.

LOVE NOVELS, Mary Gneadinger, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17, 25¢ a line on acceptance.

MODERN LOVE, Grace Brandels, 366 Madison Ave., NYC 17, no details given.

NEW LOVE, Peggy Graves, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17, up to 20 lines. Pays on Acc.

RANCH LOVE STORIES, same as **MODERN LOVE**.

RANGELAND ROMANCES, Harry Wilner, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17, Old West love poetry, 25 lines or less, and pays 25¢ per line, on Acc.

ROMANCE, same as **NEW LOVE**, up to 20 lines.

ROMANCE WESTERN, Mrs. Irma Kallish, 205 East 42nd St., NYC 17, up to 24 lines. On Acc.

TEN-STORY LOVE, same as **COMPLETE LOVE**.

It will be noted that most of these magazines belong to chain publishers. In several the requirements vary considerably. You should always watch for these attempts then, to span the field. It would also be a smart trick to note where Love leaves off and the Confessions take over. There's a difference!

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HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the sales reported to us in this past month:

Virginia Sievert

Article: WISCONSIN AGRICULTURIST.

Bar Temple

Poems: Boston POST.

Mary Moon

Fiction: First Prize (short story); Second (short short story), in the NIAPF club contests.

Poetry: Second prize, as above.

Edward W. Ludwig

Article: SWING (May).

Favus Friedman & Maxine Block

Articles: SWING, MCCALL'S (May).

Helen Langworthy

Article: JOURNAL OF LIVING.

Bessie H. Hartling

Poems: (35 in 12 months) WIS WISDOM, THE CHILD'S COMPANION, Boston HERALD GLOBE & other local papers.

Stanley M. Kenney

Story: RAYBROOK (3).

Articles: RURAL NEW YORKER (2).

Carrie Esther Hamill

Article: NII.

Send your news into us. It helps you, and we can give you more specific and practical assistance in REWRITE. Our aim always is to help you sell more and better ms.

WE: OUR ENVELOPS

Although we have reordered on a number of sizes recently, we have been able to retain present prices. We now have a plentiful supply of the 10 x 13s, which were out of stock. We also hope to stock first grade labels for addressing your ms. envelopes both ways.

DO YOU NEED MS. ENVELOPS?

The best quality at the lowest prices.. We try to give you the most for your money. We adjust prices frequently to the cost of replacements.

SMALLEST Sizes (No. 10½ & 11½) (two fold)

25 of each \$.90 50 of each \$1.65.

SMALL Sizes (6½x9½ & 7x10) (one fold)

25 of each \$1.00 50 of each \$1.65.

LARGE Sizes (9x12 & 10x13) (flat)

15 of each \$1.00 30 of each \$1.90.

All prices plus postage. 30c. is average.

A LIMITED MARKET AND SOME GOOD ADVICE

SPORT, Albert M. Perkins, 205 East 42nd St., NYC 17, wrote us a letter about its ms. needs that offers a good deal of practical advice on how to interest any editor. Substitute a less specialized and more general field, and you still can apply Mr. Perkins' wise, very sensible theories about how to bait a hook, which will catch an editor.

"While most of SPORT's feature pieces are written by the nation's top sportswriters—whom we have under exclusive contract, we're always in the market for suggestions and ideas from freelancers.

"Most of the latter make the mistake of a too general query, suggesting merely the name of an athlete: 'I'd like to do a piece on—Ted Williams', etc. Obviously, this approach is hopeless, since we already know who all the prominent athletes are. If we want a story, we naturally commission it from one of that group of 'regulars' referred to above.

"The freelance should strive to suggest a novel idea; not names, but angles. And not just sports angles, but human-interest angles. Most athletes are either married or have the usual family connections: brothers, fathers, mothers, sweethearts, and the like. An exclusive human-interest story on Ted Williams, say, based on an interview with his wife for instance, would be a valuable property for a freelance writer to offer, assuming he could get it, which is unlikely.

"Before doing a complete ms., the writer, in our case, would be wise to query us with an outline first. Our rates for feature material begin at \$200, payable on acceptance. We also buy spectator sport cartoons at \$40 each. And Biff Bennett pays a minimum of \$5 for each SPORT item he can use."

NOTE: This is a REWRITE Exclusive. We are very grateful to Mr. Perkins for giving our readers this detailed and helpful advice. A writer contemplating trying for this market should remember (1) to study the book & (2) remember specially it is a top quality book. Only good, competent writing will be accepted here. Rush league writing will hurt you, other writers and us, because editors of Mr. Perkins' type won't be so willing to invite writers to submit material, or offer advice of this helpful kind.

Incidentally, we talked with an editor recently, who had become fed up with incompetent freelance writers. "I'm going to work, hereafter, entirely through agents." I made a mental note at the time that some editors cannot do this, because their pay rates are too low. But if you find some of the larger markets closed to you, don't blame it wholly on the editors' indigestion or snobishness. Put some of the blame where it undeniably & surely rests: on the incompetents, who foul up the markets for the rest of us.

REWRITE

THINK THIS OVER CAREFULLY!

There seems to be a prevailing illusion among many writers that a new (and untried!) magazine offers a world of hope to the "unknown" writer, who has been knocking vainly on the doors of the "regular" magazines. If we can show you that this is not true, that on the contrary, the reverse is more likely to be true, we will have helped you materially and perhaps have saved you many wasted hours. Getting in on the ground floor is usually costly. One way or another you'll be forced to pay the price of admission. Which may consist of being competent to supply an editor with what he wants; or it may be the unending worry and trouble of dealing with a fly-by-night, or an inexperienced and shakily financed organization.

Let's look at the possibilities. Suppose on the one hand that the new magazine is reliable. The larger and sounder it is, greater is the planning that went in it before a single issue went to press. That means that while the editor is starting fresh and presumably has no large inventory of mss., his plans are not so spontaneous and impromptu, that he will be depending entirely upon the mss. you rush to him when you see the first issue on the stands. No, what he buys after the magazine is announced and begins to appear, will be for the schedule many months, perhaps a year ahead.

There is also this factor: a new magazine is an experiment. Perhaps the editor & publisher have guessed wrong; reader reactions will be different from what they expected. A period of uncertainty and quick changes has got to be taken for granted. The editor has necessarily to work with agents or writers, professional writers, on whom he can lay his fingers quickly. The chance of a freelancer helping him materially at this point is entirely coincidental. It is not a percentage to gamble on seriously.

In the case of the small magazine, pay is almost always low and on publication. Editorial budgets are haphazard until the advertisers decide the book will survive and begin to support it. Of course, if the editor can't get advertising, the chances are that much more unpredictable, unless he has money (and plenty of it, too) behind him. You may be rewarded, if you are prepared to be a "boy scout" and work with the editor voluntarily at your own expense. But then, things being what they are, the editor may revolutionize his plans, may forget about all the help you gave him in time of need, or he is likely to sell out or get another angel, and poof—away goes your investment of time and energy. Again, you're betting on long odds.

There is no better bet across the board as they say in horse racing, than to shoot at a reputable editor of long standing; and back up your shot with imaginative writing and a competent job of writing. Only yesterday, a

writer asked me what I thought of a new magazine. She is a writer with many years of experience behind her and the record of doing some good work. But like a lot of less capable writers, she has the weakness of keeping her eyes on the mirage of the new & easy-to-crack magazines. I told her she was just a push-over for every hook loaded with summer bait. I did not mean to hurt her feelings and hereby apologize, if I did. But if she, and millions of inexperienced writers, would devote the same amount of energy they waste on the vain, illusory dream of getting into the world of professional writing by way of the backdoor, on attacking successfully one of the regular, seasoned markets, at the end of 10 years they would find themselves much further ahead. In this business there is no short-cut. In the final analysis each of us will be judged ruthlessly on our imagination, technical competence and use of these alone.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

The Charles M. Schwab Memorial Library has been opened by the Bethlehem Steel Co. in its general office building at Bethlehem, Pa. It is open freely to serve the "technical public, men from other companies, students and writers. In a word, anyone with a working interest in any phase of the technology of iron and steel."

DAILY MEDITATIONS, Box 2710, San Antonio, sends a Rejection slip, which states rather explicitly its needs: "Metaphysical teaching and esot; success & inspirational articles, Mayan archeology and discoveries, non-sectarian religious teachings on the power of prayer. Length: 800 to 1,700 words. Pay: 1¢-1½¢ per word on Ass. Report in 60 days."

The University of Chicago plans to publish THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICANISMS early in 1951. It will supplement the DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH, published by the University in 1944.

News Break. Doubleday & Co. has related a trifle gleefully that the woman who kidnapped a baby from a hospital incubator, kept it alive by reading a book, "Your Baby: The Complete Baby book for Mothers & Fathers" by Dr. Schultz & Lee F. Hill. That's a 25-day record of some sort! File your orders with the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.

G.S. Hammond Co. have just published "Hammond's Complete World Atlas" (\$5.00).

"WRITERS ON WRITING", UNH Conference Staff Handbook to which Bill Harris contributed 2 chapters, was recently recommended by Brookline and Worcester, Mass., Public Libraries and it is available in the Leominster Mass. Library (Elva's hometown).

"Death Comes For the Archbishop" memorable novel by Willa Cather, is back in stock. It had been out of stock. The same applies to: "My Mortal Enemy" also by Willa Cather.

REWRITE

PLAIN TALK ON A VITAL SUBJECT

The writer-editor relationship is a ticklish one. It requires infinite courtesy and tact, even diplomacy on the part of everyone concerned. REWRITE enjoys an unusual reputation with regard to it, and to a beyond average degree holds the confidence of authors, agents and editors. This is because we have always handled the problems of market notes judiciously and realistically. We are on the side of writers' heart and soul. We want to see them sell more mss. But we know it can't be done by (1) printing inaccurate information; (2) soft-soaping writers; criticizing editors habitually on the ground that their ambition is always to stamp on writers, and eat them alive.

The truth lies on both sides. We have always acted on the principle that to improve relations between our friends on both sides of the fence, we must view every problem in an objective and impartial manner. An ever increasing number of writers, agents, editors appreciate our contributions to the improvement of the writer-editor relationship and respect us for what we have done & what we stand for. They realize that we can't be right all the time. (We would not be human if we were.) But at least we try to be entirely honest, and fair to both sides.

Unfortunately, there are "stinkers" among both the writers and editors, with a number scattered among the agents and critics, who are placed by the nature of their work, between the two camps. Unfortunately also, it is a fact that since REWRITE is sold on the newsstands in several major cities, and its available in many public libraries throughout the land, ours is not a controlled circulation. Much as we should like to have it so, ours is not a family of writers whom we know and can vouch for everyone. That means that writers who are not members of the WCS Family can at will and without our being aware of it, damage our reputation with editors.

We lean over backwards to write our market tips so that they will be accurate, fair to all and not misleading. We try to protect a writer from making a fool of himself by approaching an editor he is obviously not experienced enough to satisfy. In the same way we try to protect editors from the ignorant illiterate and, worst of all, the combative and pugnacious writer, who takes every rejection slip as a personal injury. Such writers injure the reputations of all of us and close markets that would otherwise be open. They do this by writing nasty, abusive letters to the editors.

Recently on a single day we talked with 2 editors, both of whom reported this kind of insolence on the part of writers. Even supposing that the writers had a certain amount of "right" on their side, how can you possibly win in a fight of this kind? The edit-

or if he does not like your attitude, naturally will slam the door in your face. You've lost a market forever.

But here's the rub. Whenever one of these "stinkers" on the writers' side of the fence (and we have learned by sad experience that there are plenty on the editorial side, too) barges in and picks a fight, he injures not only himself, but all other writers also. I know any number of editors, who do not wish to be listed as an open market. They've had unfortunate experiences with stinkers. They have watched irresponsible editors of writers' magazines write glowing (and often inaccurate) "come-ons", which brought swarms, literally, of illiterate and abusive writers down about their heads.

Editors and agents who are thought by the average inexperienced writer to be aloof and snooty, because they will not open doors to the general run of writers, have frequently told us privately that they will be glad to see mss. we personally are willing to vouch for, or to work with writers whom we believe have something on the ball. Since the confidence of editors is one of our most important stocks-in-trade, we have at all times exercised this privilege with utmost care. Naturally, we have not sent writers to editors or agents unless we felt reasonably sure it would be advantageous to both the parties.

We are not agents, nor are we the kind of fee peddling critics, who seek to justify a fee by letting an editor reject a mss. forum. That is a form of passing the buck which we consider reprehensible. If we put writers in touch with editors or agents, it is because we believe the writers have a reasonable ability to supply the kind of writing needed by the editor or agent. We have not been uniformly right, and we regret to say that in a few instances writers have misrepresented themselves or their professional background to the extent that we have had to apologize to the editor or agent for wasting time for them.

That again, is where the "stinkers" injure all writers as well as themselves. We have had to tighten our policies in this shop so as to refuse to introduce any writers or mss. to editors or agents unless we are personally familiar with the ability of the client. That opens us to the charge that we are trying to stage-manage a fee for ourselves. Thus both honest, hardworking writers and we ourselves suffer because the "stinkers" thinking only of themselves and their hateful little egos, have destroyed the opportunity for us all to do business on professional credit.

The word "stinker" is not a pleasant one. But it adequately describes a certain selfish and generally incompetent type of writer. Please be assured that we and every editor and agent readily recognizes that many decent writers can act mistakenly out of ignorance or lack of experience. When we make

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use of this horrid, but serviceable term, we do not include them. But it should also appear obvious that no writer can risk getting the reputation of being a "stinker" to editors. Writing and especially selling is serious business. It should be taken seriously by those who climb the ladder of fame & fortune. (And I may add parenthetically at this point that REWRITE is respected, and valued by many professional writers and editors because we never let our readers think writing is a gay and debonair way of earning an easy living. To do this is good for our readers, but not for our own circulation! But we feel that if we can make one "stinker" either reform or repent his sins, we have helped all writers and editors.)

Writers' clubs and teachers of writing obviously, can render an untold service by doing the same thing. Whenever any of us help writers or would-be writers to (1) win respect of editors and (2) promote their active friendship by being thoughtful of their interests, we are helping ourselves. There is time enough to beat them over the head, and to talk about enforcing better working conditions—after we have cleaned our own house and put "fight" solidly on our side!

A RELIABLE MS. MARKET DIRECTORY

GALLEY, Whipple McClay, Box 190, No. Hollywood, Cal., the excellent little magazine about little magazines and now in its 2nd year of publication, is now using articles about publishing matters. (Bill wrote one for the editor a few days ago, on assignment. It is to be used in the Summer issue, I think.) A commendable policy of promoting, and actively urging support for the little magazines, can pay off in more and better markets. We at REWRITE are glad to work closely with Mr. McClay on this.

GALLEY offers a directory and an enormous amount of concise, accurate information regarding a large number of magazines. It is therefore, invaluable for writers searching for markets. It costs: 50¢ per copy, \$1.00 a year. We keep it regularly on our Central Ms. Market File desk for ready reference.

SUSPENDED, OR OVERSTOCKED

N.E. LIVING has "temporarily suspended. It hopes to resume in June." As we stated in our May issue, we definitely cannot recommend it as a market until conditions are stabilized. Mrs. Towle has returned all mss. and is not now handling those that come in. We may add that this magazine never came up to our minimum standards and would not have been listed in REWRITE, except for our loyalty to the editor. Our reward: the magazine blew up in our face. Sentiment in this business doesn't pay.

Overstocked: JUNIOR WORLD; The WRITER and PROFITABLE HOBBIES (for articles about Writing; open on other subjects).

MARKET FOR ARTICLES & FILIERS

The WORKBASKET, Theodore M. O'Leary, 2401 Burlington, Kansas City 16, Mo., is a needle craft & home magazine (Monthly, \$1.00 yearly). It's edited and published by the folk, who do PROFITABLE HOBBIES, a fine market for freelance writers. (Circulation over a million.)

Ted O'Leary wants one or more articles in each issue up to 2,000 words about household activities: decoration, needlework, design, making clothes, preparing food, gardening & so on. How-to-do pieces to enable families, Ted explains, "to eat better, dress better, live in more attractive surroundings, without large outlays of money."

"For authenticity, we want these articles written in terms of the experience & accomplishments of actual women, one family to a story. Specific, not general terms. First or third person. Factual information on what & how the project has been done. Down-to-earth data, so that it can be used as a guide for and by others."

"If a profit financially has been made, it should be stressed and again, specific merchandising and selling methods explained. It should still place emphasis, however, on the home and interest to women. Photos, diagrams & patterns will be used. No snapshots; \$10 glossies."

"We pay: 2¢ per word, and up to \$6 cash for pix. Payment is on acceptance."

"Women Who Make Cents" (Dept.) pays \$2.00 for each brief idea on how to make money in the home."

"With the Cooks" (Dept.) pays \$2.00 for any recipes used. Address either dept. as above."

THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

The FTC has ordered Rexall Drug Co. & its Cel Drug Co. & Liggett Drug Co. stores, "to stop misrepresentation of prices. Practice has been to mark up prices, then offer a 1¢ sale of 2 units for the price of one plus a penny."

Complaints have been issued against "Ana-hist" and "Kriptin" (cold remedies). False, and misleading information, it is charged.

Lawyers for the Bristol-Myers Co. seeking to defend the Company against a complaint of misrepresenting the therapeutic values of a product called "Resistab", charged that the FTC was "predisposed" to issue cease and desist orders, thus impugning the FTC's integrity. The charge was "stricken from the records", but when the case has been disposed, the lawyers will be cited for "disciplinary action" (the equivalent of contempt of court. Note: the FTC is your friend; defend it and maintain its prestige in Congress.

REWRITE

A THOUGHT TO LIVE BY

When William S. Carlson, the new president of the University of Vermont, made his first press statement some of his remarks from an article he wrote for SCHOOL & SOCIETY, earned a quote. Think of them in terms of writers and you will see why we think them good medicine.

"The smugly satisfied have no place in education...Educators must be dissatisfied constantly and persistently with basic premises and techniques and with end-results....The finest and most effective education is found not in the great universities, but in one's own world in which he lives....We train too many students just to hold a job....We turn out far too many graduates with relatively-speaking an excellent equipment for earning a living, but with virtually no equipment—to help them lead a life worth living. Earning a living is not necessarily the same as leading a life worth living...Most graduates feel that the world owes them a living, and an ever-increasing pay check because they went to college. A life worth living is one of maximum responsibility and of maximum contribution to society.

"Graduates are no longer merging into the stable world of old, but rather a fast-changing world. The graduates' attitude must be: to go into the world and 'sow this great material and cultural and spiritual wealth' so that it may bear fruit everywhere and add to the security and enrichment of our people.

"Present conditions demand that educators strive to train students not only to accept constant and accelerated change, but also to accept their responsibilities in the world's turmoil. Educational methods, attitudes and techniques and philosophies of yesterday may be no good tomorrow. Education itself must, inevitably, change to keep pace with the changing world. There is no other choice but acceptance of this mission."

Read those comments again and substitute, line by line, the word "writing" for "education". You will then see why REWRITE always preaches a dynamic philosophy for writers.. Wherever there is discontent, there is some material for an article, story or poem. And where there is curiosity, indignation and a moral perception and understanding of the code of the Infinite by whose grace we live, there may be a writer and a poet. Using the media of communication in emotional terms, writers can be the greatest educators and molders of public opinion. The veritable cornerstones of every lasting culture and civilization.

A LITERARY MAGAZINE CHANGES PACE

The PARTISAN REVIEW, William Phillips, 1040 Broadway, NYC 17, is now on a by-monthly instead of monthly basis. It is a political & literary magazine listed as paying 2¢ a word. Like all such publications, it hasn't found a circulation able to support it.

A BY-PRODUCT OF HOBBY WRITING

Here is a letter we received from a Canadian subscriber to REWRITE, which shows some of the by-products your writing may develop.

"Some three years ago I started a series of articles for TURF & SPORT DIGEST, Baltimore, Md., which were called, "Making Money is My Hobby". They were based on my own experiences while I was racing and training thoroughbreds years ago. The articles were so well received that I was asked to repeat them. I must have had around 200 letters from all over the States, Canada and England, asking for further data. Since then I have kept in communication with a large number of these people.

"This in turn led to the forming of a Club—a group of men and women who like to talk and write about horses and horse racing for sport. It is astounding the number of people who really are interested. They come from all walks of life. Altogether the Club has kept me busy, but I enjoy it immensely.

"I thought it might give some of the readers of REWRITE a boost in the right direction if they knew the fun and friendship which I have gained because I wrote about "My Hobby". It is possible that they have hobbies interesting to others around the globe. So why not share the fun? It brings in a lot of pennies too, from the checks received for the original articles.

R. H. Matthews

Thank you, Reggie, for a suggestion which may prove fruitful for some other writer.

PRIZES FOR POETS

Anonym Workshop, G.M. Jackson Clerk of Contests, 32 Edgewood Ave., Mill Valley, Cal., is offering \$10 and \$5 for original, unpublished sonnets. Your own theme, excluding a didactic treatment. Forms: Petrarchan: 1221, 1221, 343, 434. Line 11 must be end-stopped. Spenserian: 1212, 2323, 3434; 55. Deadline: June 11, 1950. Membership fee (to cover expense): 25¢. (NOTE: we publish these notes, as soon as received. But many of our readers will not get this news in time. Therefore, we urge (1) the Workshop to get its Bulletin to us earlier (before April 10th for a June contest); and (2) writers should get on the mailing list of the Anonym Workshop.)

An anonymous California poet donates this organization's prize money. In the May contest 60 poets from 18 states contributed 296 entries. We believe a goodly number of this large group of contestants was achieved because REWRITE has helped to give wider publicity coverage to this fine organization. A member of the WCS Family tied for First, another for First Honorable Mention. Several others are occasional correspondents (among the published prize winners) whom we are always glad to hear from. Members of the WCS-REWRITE Family do show up everywhere! Swell!

REWRITE

LATE BOOKS FOR REVIEW

MID-CENTURY AMERICAN POETS. Edited by John Ciardi. Twayne Publishers. \$4.00. Self-chosen selections by 15 American poets together with statements in prose of their individual writing principles. Among other points, each poet discusses obscurity and unintelligibility. Naturally, these poets can be as interesting or unenlightening as the statements requested of them by the editor. But there is a wide deviation in the manner and methods of reply. And in some cases, ironically, their prose is as hard to understand as their poetry.

It is interesting to watch the different ways these 15 poets take the stand in defense of modern poetry. An insight into their character can be gained by reading their prose explanations of themselves and their poetry. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection. E.R.H.

AMERICA'S NEW FRONTIER, The Mountain West.. Morris E. Gurnsey. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.50.. An economic and conservation-minded appraisal of the Rocky Mountain states. A serious, intelligent analysis of a part of the country that will become increasingly important as the resources of the remainder of our nation are exhausted. A valuable reference for writers on the above mentioned subjects.

SOME POINTS IN JUVENILE WRITING

Here is a brief analysis of a juvenile by one of our WCS Family, which carries a point worth noting.

"In the middle she had him decide definitely to do something which he does not do. (I constantly warn writers not to promise something to a reader, and then fail to deliver the goods. Ed.) I cautioned her also against over-doing a little trick which, used carefully, can be very effective: coined words, for sound effects. Every time Alec landed in the mud or somewhere, it was 'friggity, fruggity, froggity'.

"Very cute, but then she had several other sound effects for other animals, and that made it too heavy. Then, too, I felt that she would get the best effect by keeping the expressions in a series in the same order every time they appeared. She was mixing them up: i, u, o, one time, maybe i, o, u, another.

"Children of that age-group appreciate and like to roll new words like those, on their tongues. Moreover, strict repetition is attractive to them. But I felt that to switch them around would be confusing to the children. Was I right?"

I agree most heartily, Esther Hamill. We see those principles proved in Billy's reading constantly. The very small people enjoy sound and sight more than they do ideas. It has meaning for them.

THIS IS HOW YOU GET CONFLICT

In a story I read recently there was suspense with a vengeance, and yet there wasn't any story. You might not believe this without seeing it. But it was true. There was a sense of ghostly danger, but nothing happened. The two forces in the story never really came to grips. That was a structural and strategic weakness. There was plenty of incipient menace, but, like a thunderstorm in the summer that makes a lot of noise, there was no action.

You see, a story is made up of the action that takes place between two forces at grips with each other, and also the long range of eternal meaning, implication of the action. You have to build both hand-to-hand fights, and moral significance into every story. It was an interesting one that I am describing. It was timely as the dickens: a Russian spy story. But it muffed the drama and conflict completely.

I have mentioned before in REWRITE a psychological pattern that needs to be in each and every moment of every story. It can be summarized in three steps:

(1) Stimulus. One character touches in conflict another. The MC steps on the toes, let us say, of a notorious gangster. A chain of Cause and Effect begins immediately.

(2) Reaction. The gangster warns the MC. Go away from here or I'll drill you. The gangster is scared, frightened that his racket is going to be exposed. There are preliminaries in the form of loose talk and gestures. But the real importance of the second step must be the gangster's reaction.

(3) Response. Out of the gangster's fears & necessity for defending himself comes a definite response. He does something to defend himself. It is in the nature of negative or hold-the-fort action. He is merely trying to preserve himself. If the MC is afraid, backs away, nothing will happen, and the story is going to stop.

But the gangster's response stimulates MC to react, and then to respond. A whole new, succeeding series of steps is put in motion. The result is that the MC keeps pushing in. The gangster is really forced to act now. So he reacts and responds more positively. He realizes it is a battle to the death, kill or be killed. He sends one of his underlings to bump off the brash MC. The latter is knocked, thrown back on his heels. But the gangster fails in his objective.

Without going through the details of stimulus, reaction and response, it is obvious, however, that this MC gets up from the floor and rushes to the attack again. This time he meets the gangster personally. They struggle and the hero is brought to his knees, but he is not hurt fatally. He gets up again, this

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NEWS OF THE WRITERS' BOOK CLUB

This month we are starting an innovation. We want to make better use of our space. So we are going to put the news of books on one page and have more room for news and market tips. We cannot cover all the books on writing, and the increasing number of general interest books we are receiving because of the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB'S steadily rising sales. Accordingly, we plan to review the new books once at greater length on this page. Also, we will feature each month a few good books for writers. We will supplement these by an intensive personalized free counsel service on what are the best books for each individual writer to add to his library in order to meet his special problems.

This is just another example of REWRITE'S realistic policy of giving writers the specific help they individually need. We will thus be able to give you better book buying service, and at the same time more technical advice, news and market tips in REWRITE!

THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

I TELL WHAT I WRITE. Jules Archer Frederick Fell. \$2.50. An elaboration of the idea behind the author's small brochure, this is a very interesting and inexpensive book, that tells in writers' shop-talk language how the author sold specific stories and articles. A wide variety is covered. Slicks, pulps, the large, the small and even the specialized & off-trail markets. Archer is informal, eager to give other writers the benefit of experience he has picked up the hard way. He is frank about his own mistakes. Excellent aid for all types of writers. WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

WRITING TO SELL. Scott Meredith. Harper & Brothers. \$2.75. With certain limitations, a practical and helpful book by an agent, who advertises and combines m. criticism for a fee with his agency work. (Both practices are usually shunned by the better type of agent.) SM is frankly a business agent, and as such primarily interested in the high pay slicks. This makes the book dangerous, although appealing to writers whose natural bent turns in other directions. Many of us disagree as to his implied theory that juvenile writing is not a good base for later adult writing. And that pulp writing in general is a better take-off for slick writing. Anyone working closely with writers knows that both of these implications are dangerous generalizations, deceptive half-truths. His specific illustration of a good transition, while excellent in intent, is marred by one defect, which is almost universally practiced by every amateur. It is also regrettable that he gives his own agency considerable advertising. He would speak with more authority, if he did not.

Nevertheless, in spite of these weaknesses,

this is a provocative and meaty book. Inexperienced writers will gain a lot of practical professional know-how. Every writer who seriously wishes to make writing even a part-time career, should read it. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

AUTHOR-PUBLISHER-PRINTER COMPILI. R. S. Gill. Williams & Wilkins Co. \$1.50. Now in second edition, this handy little reference should be read by every writer, because it will be a short-cut to better m. presentation, and hence more and better sales. It will save a lot of unnecessary work in revision, too. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

WRITING NON-FICTION FOR MAGAZINES. Ted Peterson. Educational Publishers. \$2.25. Brief summary, this little handbook contains much useful information. But poorly edited in the same offset format used by REWRITE its very tough on the eyes and could be improved easily. Its brevity hurts it, too.

JACKIE ROBINSON. Bill Roeder. A.S. Barnes and Co. \$2.50. In the "Most Valuable Player" series, this book is readable. It tells graphically the great experiment by which Jackie made it possible for others of his race and ability to play major league ball. Roeder's handling of this theme should be instructive to writers. A good example to follow.

MR. JONES, MEET THE MASTER. Peter Marshall. Fleming H. Revell Co. \$2.50. This anthology of sermons & prayers by the late Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, is rapidly becoming a best-seller. Read a few pages and you will understand why. A dynamic young Scot who died at only 46. A great book, and an unusual format.

HOBBY HOUSE IDEAS. Celia M. Wright. Wilkinson Pub. Co. \$3.00. A fine rich book by one of the WCS Family, who conducts a newspaper & radio column in Texas. Several of our WCS Family are included in the poetry selections she uses plentifully, always with credit to the author and original publication.

THE PEABODY SISTERS OF SALEM. Louise Hall Tharp. The dramatic, colorful & entertaining story of three sisters who played an important role in the history of American writing. An excellent book for young writers to read and study for its skilful use of historical research.

BOOKS OF PERMANENT VALUE

THE WRITERS' BOOK. Helen Hull, ed. \$4. All around handbook. Articles by actual writers who know their fields. You learn a lot.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. \$4. Once more we are able to reduce the price. A great "Plot" book. Very sound. Very practical & helpful.

STORY WRITING. Edith Mirrielees. \$3. One of the very best books on fiction writing. Good. The author is one of the great teachers.

REWRITE

WHO SAID THIS?

1. You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
2. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
3. You cannot help small men by tearing big men down.
4. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
5. You cannot lift the wage-earner by pulling the wage-payer down.
6. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
7. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
8. You cannot establish sound social security on borrowed money.
9. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
10. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Who said this? We will award a substantial prize to anyone who can give the correct source by research independent of the authority whom we quote and believe to be reliable.

We offer this quotation as a practical and dramatic illustration of the necessity for a strong thread of logic in everything, which you write. The person or persons, who wrote these words, used them with vigor and feeling. But how many of these "ten commandments" do you feel like qualifying as soon as your reading of them is finished? The great sayings of history are always self-evident and unanswerable truths.

Lippincott—SEVENTEEN Prize Novel Contest. J.B. Lippincott Co., E. Washington Sq., Philadelphia 5, Pa. The publisher and the magazine are offering prizes totalling \$5,500 to the writer of the best "maturely conceived" juvenile novel. (Length 35,000 to 70,000. Theme: honest & thoughtful depiction of the growing up experiences and problems of teenagers in today's world.) The publisher will pay \$1,500 in advance royalties; \$1,200 for serial rights (first) is offered by the magazine. In addition there is a \$250 prize for the best first 3 chapters and outline, plus \$750 additional advance against royalties—on the day of publication. For further news apply as above. **Closes:** March 1, 1951.

The YOUNG CATHOLIC MESSENGER. James T. Nealey, 132 N. Main St., Dayton 2, Ohio. (11-14 years) buys most of its material in the summer vacation period. Pays well, too. Go to it!

HOW DO BOOKS OF POETRY SELL?

Some time ago the Publishers' Weekly used as its lead article a piece discussing book sales in the Poetry field. It was based upon an earlier article in the English publication, The Bookseller. The latter made the assertion that books of poetry in England on an average sell around 200 to 300 copies. A slightly higher average is usual in America.

One of the reasons for this very unfortunate situation is that booksellers are never very willing to plug poetry by displays, purchase or publicity. If the trade will not show interest, how can the general public be expected to? Yet the magazines feature poetry, and thus prepare the way for the sale of books. Moreover, it is a commonplace in the experience of all of us in the business that poets seldom buy books of poetry. How then, can they expect books of poetry to be popular.

The ambitions of many poets to work for a poetry Day in each state with the anticipation eventually of an annual national Poetry Day is commendable. But one of the fallacies we Americans love to live by is that this intense exuberance for a short period of time generates any lasting enthusiasm. It's like taking a flashboard off the dam. For a minute or two all down the river there is a big wave of water. When it is past, the river's flow continues according to natural laws again.

Writers' clubs and study groups could enlarge the sale of poetry books by demanding more interest in poetry on the part of book sellers in their local communities. By putting on a publicity drive to see that poetry was continually news in their towns. The publication of a book by a local author and the periodic public recital or display of a collection of poetry mss. are examples. The best idea of all, of course, is to train the children to the satisfying pleasure of good poetry in one's life. A reading at the Public Library, or a poetry group similar to a story group for little children, these will gradually generate a real interest in poetry.

One by-product of the figures mentioned above should be an added ounce of caution on the part of authors, who would like to publish their own books. It will give them the best kind of a perspective on the contrasts (ahem!) offered them by those man-eating human hucksters, familiarly known as "vanity" publishers. For if a well known poet can consider himself lucky to sell 400 or 500 copies of his book, what chance has an unknown poet and an inexperienced writer to recover his investment, when he has paid one of the vipers \$600 or \$700 to put his poems inside a pair of hard covers? It's just simple algebra: even at the ridiculous 40% royalty a number of these printers offer, how many copies will you have to sell? Figure it out!

REWRITE

HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Here at ECR House we read a lot of material by young or inexperienced writers. The biggest and most common weakness is a failure to make a point, a striking point, that will send the reader away feeling that he's bitten his teeth into something he can hold on to. What do I mean by this? Well, a point can develop in a number of different ways. A newspaper feature that ties in with a news-story and thus has timeliness, has a point. A letter to the editor that calls attention to a public utterance of President Harry S. Truman, let us say, and cites the fact with specific references to Time and Place, that Abraham Lincoln said or advised the exactly opposite, would have a point.

A friend of ours told us not long ago the feeling he had as he sat listening to men & women getting on their feet to say something they considered important at the Town Meeting. "Most of them were just bumbling along aimlessly. They did not know how to begin or end. If they had a point, it was concealed, obscured in a flurry of purposeless words, a swarm of tangential remarks. Which reminds me of the story about another town where it is said the present Town Moderator is reliably stated to have got elected to office because of his unusual brevity and wisdom. Whenever he spoke upon the subject of any article, he either said: "I'm in favor of Article 7. I like it." Or he protested: "I'm agin Article 7. I don't like it." And forthwith sat down.

At a certain point in my newspaper career I was reading about 8 books a week with the idea of giving them major reviews. I would also skim through from 4 to a dozen others, on which I was expected to write a few hundred words or less, preferably less. Many of these very brief reports never saw the light of day. They were held in reserve only that the Front Office might be pleased. If an advertisement for the book happened to come in the Front Office would call up the editorial Department, and as if by magic a serious review would appear simultaneously with the ad, the following Wednesday, or Saturday. A by-product of these commercial shenanigans, however, was that I learned to write sharply to a point on almost any subject without the least trouble.

At another time I sat in for several days on a speech training course at a school the headmaster of which had hired me to teach a course in creative writing. This man challenged his students with such exercises as a daily 3-minute speech on such one-word subjects as: "You", "Me", "Death", "Bread" and so on. Each student had to introduce a selected subject, develop it and end with the proper peroration, all in the space of three minutes. Again, taking my place on the platform, afforded me a rich experience in making every word count. A stopwatch was held on us and it was an unfortunate chap, who couldn't end with a brilliant flourish after a warn-

ing thump of the gavel sounded at the end of two minutes and 30 seconds.

Possibly a point is so-called because in a normal speech or article it forms a bridge, or a sort of unifying tie-in between a general and particular statement. You start at one or the other end and move to the other. Doing this, you give the reader a sense and a distinct feeling of completeness, of perspective. Let's say you start with a general statement. "The world today is full of a number of horrors." You enlarge upon such themes, proving it by specific examples, and showing that these horrors are almost entirely man-made. You explain why and how a generation of physically and mentally weak men have grown up and seized power. You illustrate again that specific dictators such as Kaiser Wilhelm II, Stalin and many of those sadistic plimps and bullies with which Hitler surrounded himself, suffered from physical, or mental infirmities. That Hitler and Mussolini themselves were men with inferiorities and disturbed, frustrated emotions.

Finally, you end with another generality. One that reverses your field and draws an unexpected paradox from History. "But Faith, Courage and the shining shield of Hope continue to be forces to be reckoned with. The Winter passes, Spring gleams in the willows and the meadow lark sings as he wings swiftly over the grasses of yesterday, bringing food to his young. And man, too, feels that eternal urge to build and create anew." You then bring forward your specific examples—one, two, three, punch. It is the never-ending formula, the eternal, age-old worship of the Infinite that gives meaning and significance to life. No, you do not even have to believe in the wonder and mystery, to make it come alive for you, if only you see and use the irresistible logic of it. It will serve you better and carry you further, though, if you do feel the tender compassion of a God, who ordered in such a miraculous and pleasing way all things under the sun.

A writer learns by doing. You may not get paid at once. But you can always learn, and earn at least that irreducible minimum: the respect of readers, who think that you know what you are talking about. There are loads of opportunities to do that. Whether you do a letter to the editor of your local weekly or write in an extra specially enticing recipe for some novel Thanksgiving dish, you're writing for a definite purpose. The wise inexperienced writer gets up on his feet at a Town Meeting and gets experience explaining to his fellow citizens why he is again a new bridge at Epsom Falls. Or he writes letters to the editor, urging new ideas, more advanced ways of living at Hog Corner. I know I did that at one time. I met a realtor friend of mine crossing Boston Common one afternoon. I had made a suggestion in the letter column, which now 20 years later Boston is planning to adopt at a cost of \$20,000,000. It would have cost less than \$10,000,000 then. "Wil-

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liam," he stopped me with a welcoming hand. "I saw your letter in the Transcript. You were either dead right or completely wrong. I have forgotten for the moment which." I did not lose, whichever way it was, because I recall that my letter drew a fiery retort of disagreement from another important real estate management official, one of the foremost legal minds in Boston at the time, and so I was hard pressed to prove my point. In replying, I got a lesson in writing I'd have had to pay thousands of dollars for, if I'd been a client of either of those two prestigious businessmen.

I also learned an important point in that exchange of shots. What is practical for Today may not be practical for Tomorrow. The writer must be able to gauge both the immediate and overall effect of his words. He is in the position of having to "see around" a corner. He must know beyond peradventure if his words are libellous, or inaccurate. His categorical statements must be so truthful, so filled with logic and timeliness blended with eternal universality, that they will stick for a lifetime. The other night I listened to a broadcast marking the 5th anniversary of the meeting of the Americans and Russians on the banks of the Elbe. It sounded pretty silly in the light of events carried in today's headlines. Have you ever in a moment of curiosity gone back and read an old newspaper's editorial columns? It is an enlightening experience.

The careful writer, who uses words in the most precision-sharp simplicity and clarity possible, may not set the world on fire. But the chances are his words will be remembered. I have seen poems that never earned the author a check, work their way into the affections of people, so they became universal, a part of the treasury of every nation. The songs of Stephen Foster will serve as a good example. Sometimes a bit of fame is much sweeter than First Serial Rights to a short story published by the SEF, dramatized on a radio program and later televised. But sale or no sale, if a writer learns to write authoritatively and to convey a sense of conviction, it will not be long before his byline will become commonplace. For editors in their wisdom will recognize him as a professional.

WISH WE COULD BE THERE PERSONALLY

The Second Annual Philadelphia Regional Conference, Florence Kerigan, 522 Lancaster Ave., Haverford, Pa., will be held in Philadelphia, June 21-23. Speakers will include: Ruth Aley, NYC agent, Laura Lou Brookman, LADIES HOME JOURNAL, Frank Brookhouser, and Herald Bean, Curtis Publishing Co.

Workshops in Poetry, Slick Fiction (leaders: Marjorie Holmes & Claire Wallis), Juvenile (Margaret Tuttle), and Humor (William Mikech). Pearl Buck & Emily Kimbrough speak at the final meeting. REWRITE will be there!

INTOLERANCE & PANIC ARE DANGEROUS

Writers should take note of the fact that we are in the midst of a very dangerous, undemocratic period of name-calling and smear tactics. No one who handles ideas is safe. A person or organization can adopt an attitude of sanctimonious, "holier than thou" piousness and under cover of it wreak a personal revenge or persecution entirely foreign and inimical to our belief in free speech & the dignity of ideas. Much that is good in this country and elsewhere is seriously in danger of being stamped out or stifled.

There is no doubt that the Communists are waging a total war of attrition by means of confusion. They seek to bewilder & make you find it difficult to distinguish Good & Evil. Thereby they cause disunity and disregard for our national virtues. In periods of panic & fear and insecurity, we are likely to slash recklessly at friends or foes. And so destroy the articles of faith we most cherish. Thus we make ourselves easy prey of the enemy we hate.

There is no doubt that there are destructive, even treasonable forces in our midst. But that is no reason for closing down justice and the rules of evidence in favor of a hearsay rumor or mob violence. Writers beware.

"PISTOLS AT SIGHT. NO COFFEES!"

Here's the all important paragraph in the "release" blank one of the big radio advertising agencies requires every writer sending it material to sign:

"I understand that the established policy of your company is to refuse to entertain or receive ideas, suggestions or uncopyrighted works except on the distinct understanding, that they may be used by you or your clients without any obligation whatever to the person submitting them. Anything I submit to you will be on that basis"...

We are frank to say we do not like such a form at all. The Company pays high fees for the play scripts it uses. But as the underlined phrase indicates clearly it could pay nothing and yet take entire possession of a ms. It liked. Complete confidence in a business associate is not engendered, nor commercial integrity increased by holdings guns at a writer's head in that manner. Over the long period of years, most business can only be conducted with a reasonable amount of credit and faith.

A PUBLISHER'S FELLOWSHIP

Houghton Mifflin Fellowship Awards, 2 Park St., Boston 7, Mass., are now open. Applications will be received as above. Closes: January 1, 1951.

There are many other awards open to writers having a real publishable idea.

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time he knocks the gangster for a loop, and the story comes to a satisfying end.

If you will take any good story, pulp, or slick, apart, you will find that its more or less a dramatic series of these action & reaction advances and withdrawals, or retreat formations. Retreat forced by the superior, driving strength of one side or the other. A reader is thrilled to the degree that there is doubt as to who will win right up to the last inch of bitter end.

I have pointed out many times that a reader wishes to identify himself with the hero. He wishes to experience right here and now, in the living present, the MC's intense emotional experience as if it were his own. An experienced author therefore, uses every artifice he can muster to create the illusion of reality. He tries to get warmth and emotion into his story. He tries to take readers right into the dingy warehouse and fill them with the same scared feeling of dread, that the MC experiences.

But he also never forgets that sense of a hand-to-hand battle being waged, and of the tide going forward and backward. Telling a story is a paradox. You labor mightily, trying to make the reader feel that it is happening to him. And at the same time in cool and competent cynicism you jerk the strings so that it won't happen the way it would in real life. You artificially tease the reader by building up suspense until the reader shrieks and screams with terror.

Suspense is always of two kinds; you make the reader feel that the hero is going to fail; and you make him fear that the villain is going to triumph. By first pulling one and then the other, and always by successful characterization giving us the color of the plausible and natural, you let the MC climb up toward his goal, then jerk him backward.

Going back to that pattern I gave you, observe that you have two forces in conflict. You set up the MC's objective, make him advance toward it, be driven back, advance, & be driven back. Then he finally wins. That is merely the crude outline. There must be a rhythm and refinement to it. Each climax is a higher one than the last. The story builds constantly to more intense and meaningful a climax. Also, in the limited space that stories allow you, it is easy to pile too many climaxes on one another. Mere bang-bang has little appeal for even the dumbest pulp reader unless it has plausibility and some meaning emotionally for him.

That brings you to the necessity for one, two, punch strategy in putting over your effect. Machine gun bullets fly too fast to be seen properly. But when the hero lunges and the villain swings from the floor, the hero's fists come in one, two—punch, any reader's imagination is stirred. He appreciates good

technique, and timing. This is where many a beginning writer fails to tell a story well or skillfully. The pattern I have given you, which is simplicity itself, can be altered, broken up and regrouped in thousands of interesting ways. If you are telling a serial you will make it more involved and will inevitably string it out in a succession of extended series of episodes, each having one, two, punch units of their own. A one shot, a short story or a short short story will all handle the pattern differently. And indeed, no two stories will use the same count. One author may be direct, another full of indirect twists and surprises in telling a story.

It is a very good idea to learn to develop plot both from the hard boiled, cynical, tease-the-reader angle, and also the natural, plot-through-character technique. I use both many times in working with writers. At first you will tend to come with a trite or weak melodramatic plot. Think nothing of it and continue to block out the outlines. You can do this anywhere, in the streetcar, the railroad station, anywhere. Get the 3 major turns in a story; then start "yanking" it up by tightening the screws and breaking down, amplifying the larger outlines.

One trick I have used to make my mind develop a situation, is to think how I can delay or retard a given climax. I know, let's say, that your MC and the gangster are surely going to meet at the climax. But, I tell myself, we have got to have a preliminary or first trial of strength. Well, it is easily possible to invent a confidant for the gangster, have him try to sidetrack the MC. And where will this encounter take place? Well, it might take place at the lodge at the entrance to a lonely estate. But why could not a still earlier fight or beginning brush take place between these two at the hero's hotel or on the way to the lodge? Get the method? ..This trick of milking a scene, an episode or a situation, is the very heart of effective conflict.

Never finish a scene the first time, if it is possible to sustain it. The MC picks up a heavy candlestick; the villain says, "I got you covered." But don't pull his gun immediately, let him point from his pocket. The MC makes another play to escape. This time the gun has got to be brought out. But the hero bides time, perhaps teases the reader, and the villain a couple of times with false or merely threatening starts before lets go with his surprise, which turns the tables.

Do you see how in this kind of work there's nothing you can know about your characters, that may not prove useful? Every relation is a two-way one. Every twist is a double bladed one. The MC looks at it from one angle & the villain from another, opposite one. You have to know how the stimulation, reaction, and response chain will develop. So, really know your characters and their backgrounds.